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Letter dated 18 April 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 5 April 2012 from the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, on the situation in Mali (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

12-30072 (E) 230412

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Annex

Letter dated 5 April 2012 from the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States addressed to the Secretary-General

ECOWAS intentions with regard to the rebellion in the north of Mali

At the Extraordinary Session of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 27 March 2012, the Summit, in response to the worsening separatist rebellion in the north of Mali and the atrocities accompanying the seizure of territory, adopted a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and urged the armed groups to seek redress of their grievances through dialogue. In the event the armed groups failed to heed the call for negotiations, the Summit decided to take all necessary measures to end the rebellion and ensure the territorial integrity of Mali, including the use of force.

Against the background of continued attacks and atrocities by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad rebels and other armed groups, the Authority reiterated its positions in the communiqué at the end of a mini-summit in Abidjan on 29 March 2012.

Since then, however, the political and security situation in Mali has rapidly deteriorated, with the occupation of all the major cities in the north and an alarming influx of suspected terrorist and other armed groups into the conflict zone from outside Mali. While the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and the Ansar Dine rebels are jostling for control of the occupied territory, terrorist and Islamist cells, including the Organization of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Salafists, as well as networks of transnational organized crime, are expanding their influence and illegal activities in the zone. The humanitarian consequences are worsening by the day, as thousands of civilians continue to flee the atrocities.

The secessionist onslaught and criminality has turned the northern parts of Mali into the most insecure zone in West Africa today. The situation not only poses a serious threat to the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, but also, and more critically, a danger to regional and international peace and security. In that respect, the Authority views the rebellion in the north of Mali as an aggression directed against a Member State of the Community and, as such, an aggression against the Community.

The Provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence Matters (1981), and in particular, article 25 of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999), oblige ECOWAS to respond to aggression directed towards a Member State. I also wish to emphasize that these provisions are in perfect harmony with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

ECOWAS has been working very closely with the African Union on this matter. In its latest communiqué at the end of its 316th meeting on 3 April 2012, the

African Union Peace and Security Council expressed full support of all the decisions taken by the Authority so far on the situation in Mali.

In the light of the foregoing, I have the honour to inform you of the intention of the Authority to persist in seeking a peaceful end to the aggression against Mali. However, should the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and the other concerned perpetrators of the aggression continue to ignore the peaceful overtures of ECOWAS, the Authority intends to take all necessary measures, including the use of force, to defend the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, under the mandate of Chapters VII and VIII of the Charter.

While appreciating the assistance of the Secretary-General in kindly apprising the Security Council of the ECOWAS position and seeking the latter's support for the actions of ECOWAS and the African Union, I seize this opportunity to renew to you the expressions of the commitment by ECOWAS to work closely with the United Nations in the interests of regional peace and security in West Africa.

(*Signed*) Kadré Désiré **Ouédraogo**
President of the Commission